

§ 6. Influences affecting Increase and Distribution.

1. **Mineral Discoveries.**—The discovery of gold in Australia in 1851 was undoubtedly one of the most influential factors in bringing about a rapid settlement of the country. Its effect may be gauged by comparing the increase during the ten years preceding with that during the ten years succeeding the discovery. From 31st December, 1840, to 31st December, 1850, the increase was only 214,948 (from 190,408 to 405,356). During the succeeding decennium there was an increase of 740,229, the population advancing to 1,145,585 on 31st December, 1860. In 1861, owing to the opening up of the New Zealand goldfields, a rush of population from Australia set in, the result being that the net increase per annum to the population of Australia, which in 1855 amounted to 98,343, and even in 1860 was as much as 48,280, fell in 1861 to 22,564. In fact, during the year 1861 the departures from Australia exceeded the arrivals by 6,283, the gain of 22,564 being due to the births exceeding the deaths by 28,847.

In 1886 and subsequent years the gold discoveries of Western Australia led to such extensive migration to that State that its population, which on 31st December, 1885, amounted to only 35,959, increased during the next twenty years by 595 per cent., or by 10.18 per cent. per annum, to 250,138 in 1905. In this case, however, the additions to the population of the western State were largely drawn from the eastern States, so that the actual gain of population to Australia was relatively small.

2. **Pastoral Development.**—Very early in the colonization of Australia it was recognized that large areas were well adapted for pastoral pursuits, and pastoral developments led to the spread of population in various directions. As the numbers engaged in connexion therewith, compared with the value of the interests involved, are relatively small, and as pastoral occupancy tends to segregation rather than aggregation of population, the growth of the pastoral industry is not noticeably reflected in the population statistics.

3. **Agricultural Expansion.**—At the present time the area under crop in Australia is over 19 million acres. Although substantial in itself, this area, viewed in relation to the total area of Australia, is relatively small, and represents only 1.01 per cent. of the total area. Per head of population the area under crop, however, is 3.1 acres, a fairly large area when allowance is made for the recency of Australian settlement. More than 75 per cent. of the area under crop in 1927–28 was devoted to the production of wheat and hay, both of which, for profitable production in Australia, require a considerable area in the one holding. Consequently, the agricultural districts are for the most part sparsely populated, though in a less marked degree than the pastoral areas.

4. **Progress of Manufacturing Industries.**—One direct effect of the development of manufacturing industries is the concentration of population in places offering the greatest facilities for the production of particular commodities. In Australia, where manufacturing industries are as yet in their infancy, the tendency throughout has been to concentrate the manufacturing establishments in each metropolis. This has accentuated the growth of the capital cities to an extent which, when compared with that of the rest of the country, appears somewhat abnormal.

5. Influences of Droughts.—Droughts, which at times so seriously affect the agricultural and pastoral industries of Australia, have a marked influence on the distribution of population. Districts, which in favourable seasons are fairly populous, become more or less depopulated in times of drought. This movement, however, ordinarily affects only the internal distribution of the population, and not the total, but severe drought may even make its influence felt in the statistics of the total population. Thus, in the case of the drought of 1902-3, the departures from Australia exceeded the arrivals for the two years 1903 and 1904 by 12,859. It may be noted also, that for the former of these years the natural increase of population by excess of births over deaths was abnormally low, being only 51,150, as compared with 54,698 in the preceding, and 60,541 in the succeeding year. As the solution of the problem of dealing with droughts is advanced their influence will be less marked.

6. Assisted Immigration.—Assisted immigration has been a factor of some importance in the increase of population. The number of persons brought to Australia by this means has varied considerably in different periods, according to the activities of Governments in this direction. The table given in sub-section 5 of § 10 hereinafter shows that 1,048,076 persons have been brought to Australia in connexion with schemes for assisting immigration.

7. Other Influences.—(i) *Commercial Crises.* The effect on population of a commercial crisis, such as that which occurred in the early nineties of last century, is clearly indicated by comparing the migration statistics of Australia for the five years 1887 to 1891 with those for the five years 1892 to 1896. During the earlier periods the arrivals exceeded the departures by 146,872, whereas in the later period the excess of arrivals was only 2,064.

(ii) *War.* The war in South Africa left its impress on the population statistics of Australia, the departures during 1899 and 1900 exceeding the arrivals by 10,546. The effect of the recent European war is, of course, much more marked.

§ 7. Density.

1. General.—From certain aspects population may be less significant in respect of its absolute amount than in its relation to the area of the country. Australia, with an area of 2,974,581 square miles, and a population on 31st December, 1928, of 6,396,786 including aborigines, has a density of only 2.15 persons to the square mile, and is, therefore, the most sparsely populated of the civilized countries of the world. For the other continents the densities are approximately as follows:—Europe, 127; Asia, 63; Africa, 12; North and Central America, 19; and South America, 11. The population of Australia has thus about 20 per cent. of the density of South America; about 18 per cent. of that of Africa; about 11 per cent. of that of North and Central America; about 3 per cent. of that of Asia; and about 2 per cent. of that of Europe.

A map showing the density of population throughout Australia at the Census of 1921 accompanies this chapter.

Particulars concerning the number and density of the population of the various countries of the world for the latest dates for which such information is available are given in the following table. These figures have in the main been taken from the 1929 issue of the "Statesman's Year Book," and in some instances, more particularly in the cases of Asia and Africa, must be considered as rough approximations only, complete data not being obtainable.